

### **Remarks**

The various parts of the Office Action (and other matters, if any) are discussed below under appropriate headings.

#### ***Claim Objections***

The Examiner considered previously pending claims to be informal for a number of reasons. By way of the foregoing amendments, claims 7-16 have been replaced by new claims 17-30, which are believed to address all of the alleged informalities.

#### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and § 103***

The original claims were rejected as being unpatentable over Biswas et al. in view of EP 696707. This rejection is now moot in view of the newly submitted claims. However, a few comments regarding the applied references are in order.

Newly presented claims recites a device for heat treating a cast, homogenized metallic extrusion block immediately before it is fed into an extruder. The device comprises a heating device configured to heat the block to an elevated temperature, and a cooling device configured to receive the heated extrusion block in a horizontal orientation in a spraying area having a horizontal axis. The cooling device includes cooling fluid spray nozzles for rapidly cooling the heated extrusion block. The spray nozzles surround the spraying area with the axes thereof directed radially inwardly in relation to the horizontal axis of the spraying area.

This is in stark contrast to the device disclosed in Biswas et al. In the Biswas et al. device, the block 10 is maintained in a vertical orientation within the chilling chamber 5. Moreover, with respect to claim 26, the block is controllably moved through the chilling chamber while being sprayed with a coolant. Accordingly, claim 17 is novel in relation to Biswas et al.

As for obviousness, the skilled person would not have been motivated to modify Biswas et al. in a manner that would give rise to a device as set forth in claim 17. Any such modification would result in the device of Biswas et al. no longer operating in its

intended manner, i.e., that of maintaining the block vertical as it moves through a chilling chamber.

EP 696707, which was cited only in respect of recuperator burners, does not overcome the deficiencies of Biswas et al. as a teaching reference vis-a-vis claim 17 and the claims depended from claim 17.


For at least the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 17-30 are patentable over the applied references.

**Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing, request is made for timely issuance of a notice of allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

RENNER, OTTO, BOISSELLE & SKLAR, LLP

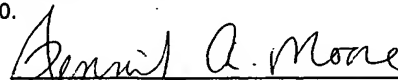
By   
Don W. Bulson, Reg. No. 28,192

1621 Euclid Avenue  
Nineteenth Floor  
Cleveland, Ohio 44115  
(216) 621-1113

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